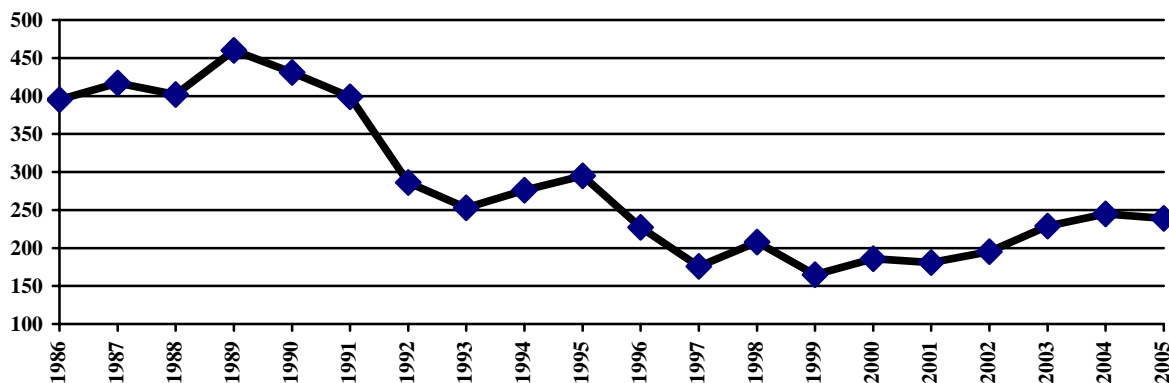


ROBBERY

is the taking or attempted taking of anything of value from the care, custody, or control of a person or persons by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear. This crime includes muggings, purse snatchings, and bank hold-ups.

**Twenty Year Review:
Robbery in Cambridge, 1986-2005**



245 reported in 2004 • 239 reported in 2005

Robberies in the City had been slowly increasing in number since 2001. This trend ended in 2005, when robberies decreased 2.4% overall compared to 2004. A closer look at different types of robbery reveals that a decrease was recorded in street robberies, whereas commercial robbery reports increased by 22%.

	2004	2005	% Change
Commercial Robbery	60	73	+22%
Street Robbery	185	166	-10%
Total	245	239	-2.4%

Due to its violent nature, robbery is one of the most feared crimes. It is one of the top crimes considered by residents when they estimate the relative “safety” of an area. It is also one of the main concerns of business owners. Often, suspects approach their target, threatening to cause harm if the victim does not relinquish money or property. Weapons are brandished in some cases, however a suspect may just rely on the victim’s perceived fear of harm to commit the crime. Most incidents involve little physical contact between the suspect and victim, and often result in no harm to the victim, especially when they do not resist the suspect’s demands.

COMMERCIAL ROBBERY

From 1970-1990, Cambridge averaged 100 commercial robberies annually. Throughout the 1990’s the number of robberies decreased dramatically to an average of 45 a year (with a high in 1990 of 102 and a low in 1999 with 18). Since 2000, the number of reported commercial robberies has been steadily increasing.

Commercial robbery is described as the taking by force or threat of force anything of value from the care or custody of a commercial or financial establishment. Examples of this crime include the bank heist, the cab stick-up, and the convenience store hold-up. Commercial incidents tend to occur early in the morning or late into the night.

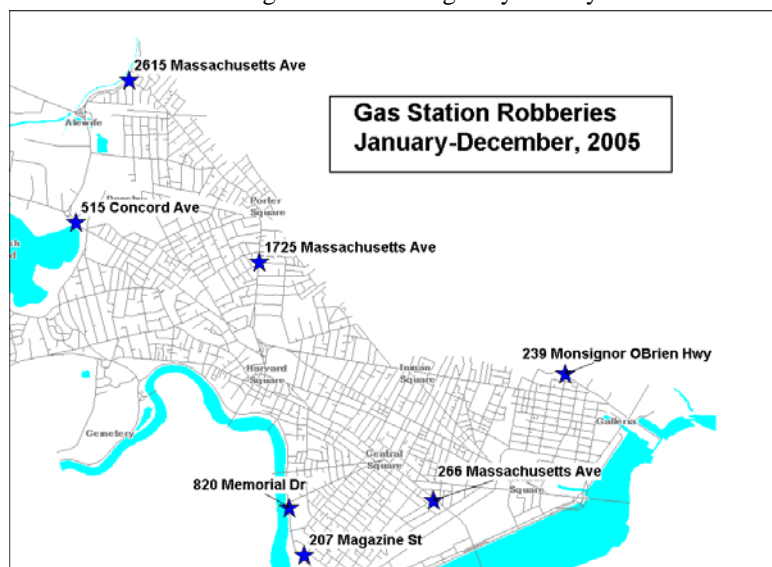
Convenience stores were the most common target of commercial robbers in 2005. Approximately 23% of the robberies in 2005 were of convenience stores, and the majority of these incidents occurred in the early morning hours between midnight and 3 a.m.

A regional commercial robbery pattern developed which affected Cambridge, Somerville, Bedford, and Watertown. Dubbed the “Band-aid Bandit”, the suspect, a man with a band-aid on his face, entered convenience stores and gas stations

and asked for a carton of cigarettes. He then claimed to have a gun, although one was never shown, and demanded money from the register. After combining intelligence from neighboring departments and Crime Analysis, the Major Crimes Unit detectives made an arrest of a 44-year-old homeless man and a 45-year-old Dorchester woman who was his accomplice. This individual later confessed to these robberies spanning numerous jurisdictions.

Robberies of gas stations in 2004 increased 200% over 2003, and gas station targets remained high in 2005. The Shell Station at 239 Monsignor O'Brien Highway was by far the most frequent target of robbers; they reported 8 (50%) of the

gas station robberies. This location was targeted sporadically throughout the year, and while they reported two robberies in September 2005, a discernable pattern did not develop.



The majority of suspects in these cases were males who appeared to be in their 20's or 30's. In at least 6 incidents, a gun was implied but not shown. In approximately eight cases, a weapon was shown, commonly a firearm, but knives were also used. In a number of incidents, the suspect pretended to need assistance, or began to make a purchase before demanding money from the clerk.

Bank robberies were the third most common type of commercial robbery reported in Cambridge. Of the 13 bank robberies, 12 of them occurred

between 11 a.m. and 3:30 p.m., with Wednesdays and Thursdays having been the most common days. A pattern developed in April, ending in a high profile arrest by Cambridge officers. Two incidents occurred in which a man entered separate banks, passed a note and demanded money. Based on analysis of these incidents, the locations of the perpetrator's next hit, including the Wainwright Bank on Alewife Brook Parkway, were identified by Crime Analysis and detectives. A week after the second robbery, the perpetrator entered the Wainwright Bank and passed a note demanding money, and fled into a waiting vehicle with a female accomplice. Cambridge officers in the area of this incident were able to pursue the pair as they fled into Boston and ultimately made the arrests.

STREET ROBBERY

Street robberies historically take place during the evening hours, particularly after drinking establishments close, and in dark areas.

"Street robbery" describes all robberies committed against individuals, as opposed to commercial establishments. Examples of street robberies are

"muggings," "car-jackings," and "purse snatchings."

The number of street robberies reported in 2005 decreased by 10% over the previous year, marking the lowest total since 2002. The numbers of street robberies across each neighborhood varied widely, and is a reflection of the residential and commercial mixture in each area. For example, Cambridgeport, Area 4 and Mid-Cambridge are much more densely populated, and are closer to train stations and drinking establishments, each factors which contribute to higher numbers of potential targets for street robbers. Individuals can become targets when they are walking alone late at night, distracted or intoxicated.

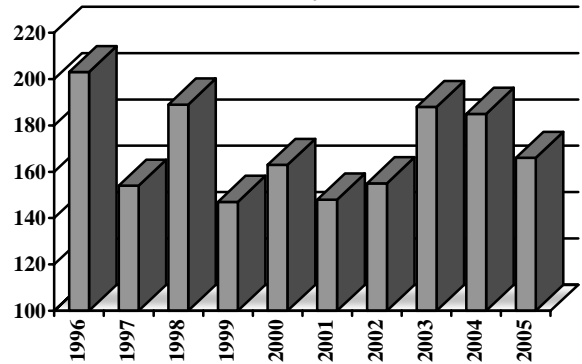
COMMERCIAL ROBBERIES BY LOCATION TYPE			
Type	2003	2004	2005
Bank/Armored Car	18	14	13
Cab	0	7	3
Café	1	5	2
Convenience	6	10	17
Gas Station	5	15	16
Drug Store	4	0	4
Fast Food	0	2	1
Hotel/Motel	0	2	1
Jewelry Store	0	0	0
Liquor Store	0	0	1
Misc. Retail	7	5	2
Parking Garage	1	1	0

Approximately 71% of the time, a weapon was used (or threatened) in the commission of a street robbery. The most commonly used weapons in 2005 were knives (22% of cases), followed by hands/fists/feet (21% of cases) and a handgun (19% of cases). A rope was used around the neck of the victim in two cases in May, causing minor injuries to each victim. These rope-related incidents were very unique in Cambridge; no similar crimes had been reported prior or since that date.

Despite the name, street robberies can take place in many different places, including parks, parking lots, or apartment hallways. Still, nearly 78% of all street robberies occurred on the street or sidewalk. Five percent of incidents took place in local parks, and approximately 1% occurred in an ATM. Three incidents were classified as home invasions because suspects broke into victims' homes and threatened them and demanded money. Victims in two of these cases knew the suspects. In one case, a woman was impersonating an elderly care nurse, and when she entered the victim's apartment, she locked him in the bathroom and stole money from his home.

The majority of street robberies throughout the city occurred between 7 and 11:00 p.m., or between 2-3:00 am. These are common times for street robberies to be reported because people are walking home after work or after the bars close.

Street Robbery 1996-2005



FIVE HISTORICAL STREET ROBBERY HOT SPOTS

- 1. CENTRAL SQUARE**, specifically the area of Massachusetts Avenue between Washington and Franklin Streets, down Pearl Street. This is also a prime location for homeless on homeless robberies. Mostly predatory, but also purse snatchings concentrated in the late afternoon and late evening.
- 2. CAMBRIDGESIDE GALLERIA**, particularly the First Street entrance, including the Lechmere MBTA Station area. These are usually juveniles robbing each other between 3:30PM and 6:00PM
- 3. HARVARD SQUARE**, around Church Street, Brattle Street and Harvard Yard. Predatory robberies in the late evening mixed with early evening pack robberies.
- 4. RUSSELL FIELD AND THE ALEWIFE MBTA STATION**. The 300-400 blocks of Rindge Avenue hold the major concentration for these incidents. Bully boy and pack robbers target people leaving the station and crossing through the field.
- 5. UPPER CAMBRIDGEPORT**, the area surrounded by Franklin and Erie Streets, between Brookline and Pleasant Streets. These incidents are predatory in nature and concentrated during the late night and predawn hours of weekends.

The Crime Analysis Unit breaks down incidents of street robbery into similar types for further analysis. Approximately 52% of the street robberies were "predatory", where the victim is approached by one or two suspects, threatened and robbed. The second most common type reported in 2005 was purse snatchings. A breakdown of street robbery types can be found on the following pages.

STREET ROBBERIES BY NEIGHBORHOOD

AREA	2003	2004	2005
East Cambridge	18	15	17
M.I.T. Area	6	2	1
Inman/Harrington	6	9	15
Area 4	31	40	27
Cambridgeport	39	43	30
Mid-Cambridge	16	13	20
Riverside	19	22	14
Agassiz	2	6	4
Peabody	9	8	11
West Cambridge	9	7	5
North Cambridge	27	18	16
Cambridge Highlands	1	1	4
Strawberry Hill	3	1	2

Protect yourself and your business!! Please see the Protect Yourself section starting on page 137 for tips on how you can protect yourself against becoming a robbery victim, and how to handle the situation if you do find yourself in dangerous circumstances.

Frequently Occurring Scenarios in Cambridge

A long-term trend analysis of street robberies in Cambridge reveals a number of frequently recurring scenarios. The number in parenthesis after the category indicates how frequently that categorization occurred in Cambridge this past year:

Acquaintance Robberies (5): Related to domestic robbery and homeless robbery (see below), Acquaintance Robberies are committed by someone the victim knows. Common scenarios include drinking buddies robbing each other after a night at the bar, friends turning on each other, drug disputes, and robberies between co-workers.

ATM Robberies (4): In this type of robbery, the suspect may approach the victim immediately after the victim withdraws money from an ATM and demand for them to hand over the cash, or the suspect may wait behind the victim as they make a transaction, then take the money directly from the ATM and run. An ATM robbery can also occur when suspects approach a victim on the street, threaten the victim by displaying or implying a weapon, and demand the victim go to an ATM and withdraw money for them.

Bully Boys (4): Juvenile robberies of intimidation. In most occurrences, the victim knows the perpetrators. Committed by and against school-aged youths, they occur on the way home from school, or at playgrounds, malls, parks, and skating rinks. Two to four juvenile males usually strong-arm their victim, stealing such things as his jacket, hat, or lunch money.

Carjacking (2): In this scenario, a lone predator approaches a victim entering or exiting his or her car, or when stopped at a traffic light. The robber orders the victim out of the vehicle and demands the keys.

Dial-A-Victim (4): These robberies target delivery service personnel. In these situations, suspects usually brandishing a knife or gun intercept a delivery person.

Domestic (5): This type of scenario occurs when someone close to the victim, like a family member, romantic partner or roommate, takes money or property from them by the use or threat of violence.

Drug Deal (1): Typically drug deals gone awry.

Homeless Robberies (7): These are incidents of homeless people robbing each other. The majority of these robberies occur in the vicinity of Central and Harvard Squares, or at various shelters. The victim is usually acquainted with the perpetrator, and in many cases, both are intoxicated. Property stolen ranges from a bottle of wine to a blanket to a pair of shoes. Like domestic robberies, homeless robberies are sometimes precipitated by past debts, real or imaginary.

Pack Robberies (19): In this situation, a group of three to eight individuals will stalk victims around shopping malls, MBTA stations, streets, and recreational areas. The majority of these robberies occur on Friday or Saturday nights, when the “pack” is returning from a dance or party. The robberies are not always premeditated, but the victim—typically a male between the ages of 15-25, walking alone—simply ends up on the wrong place at the wrong time.

Predatory Robberies (87): This type of street robbery has the most pronounced effect on a citizen’s perception of safety. Predatory robberies are synonymous with “muggings.” In the typical scenario, one or two men approach the victim with knife or gun and demand cash. The danger of serious injury is constantly present. Cambridge typically experiences more two-person predatory robberies than any other type.

Purse Snatch (23): The purse-snatcher is generally unarmed, and has little intent to cause injury. After “casing” a victim—usually a female carrying a purse, bag, or wallet—this robber approaches quickly—on foot or on a bicycle—and snatches the item out of the victim’s hands or off her shoulder before she has a chance to react, often effecting a “body check” in the process. Many incidents also involve the snatching of purses from the ground at outdoor cafes where accessibility is easy.

Bikejackers (2): Juvenile robberies of intimidation where the primary property target are bicycles.

Home Invasion (3): One of the most serious robbery types. Home invasions involve robbers entering their victim’s homes, usually at night, subduing the residents, and robbing the home. Fortunately this type of robbery is rare in Cambridge, and when it occurs the victim generally knows the perpetrator.

